

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

The applicant and the undersigned wish to thank Examiner Cazan and SPE Vo for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview of February 14, 2006. The Amendments discussed during the interview have been presented above and the arguments made are repeated herein for the record.

Claims 1-16 are now pending.

The disclosure was objected to because of a noted informality. The informality noted by the Examiner has been corrected above.

Claim 2 was objected to because of a noted informality. Claim 2 has been amended above to correct the informality noted by the Examiner.

Original claims 1-3 and 5-12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kin. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Original claim 1 was directed to a method of manufacturing a center electrode for a spark plug comprising press-fitting a core member into a metal cup and, thereafter, forming a small-diameter portion at the closed end of the metal cup. Claim 1 has been amended above to recite even more specifically that the small-diameter portion has a diameter smaller than a transverse cross-section through the cup and core assembly from which it protrudes. As explained for example on page 7 of applicant's specification, because the core member is press-fitted in the metal cup before the small-diameter portion is formed, the small-diameter portion is completely free from deformation that might otherwise occur during the press-fitting operation. This ensures excellent accuracy in the shape of the small-diameter portion. Additionally, because the small-diameter portion is formed after the core member is

press-fitted in the metal cup, the press-fitting load or pressure can be increased to ensure that the core member and the metal cup are joined with sufficient adhesion to ensure excellent conductivity of the center electrode.

It is respectfully submitted that Kin does not anticipate the formation of a small-diameter portion as recited in original claim 1 and certainly not as now even more specifically recited in amended claim 1.

In this regard, Kin merely discloses a core member pressed fitted in a metal cup. There is no disclosure in Kin, however, of forming a small-diameter portion at the closed end of the metal cup, that is, a small-diameter portion that protrudes from the bottom portion of the metal cup and has a diameter smaller than a transverse cross-section through the cup and core member from which it protrudes. Therefore, Kin does not anticipate claim 1 nor any of the claims dependent therefrom.

Newly added claim 15 is directed to a method of manufacturing a center electrode that includes press-fitting a core member into a metal cup to form a cup and core assembly, then setting the cup and core assembly into a die having three different diameter portions, and then cold-forging the cup and core assembly in the die to form a cup and core assembly that has a lower end formed with a small-diameter portion, smaller in diameter than the cup and core assembly.

As noted above, Kin merely discloses a core member pressed fitted into a metal cup. There is no disclosure whatsoever of a die to cold forge the cup and core assembly to form large, intermediate and small-diameter portions as claimed. The remaining art of record does not teach or suggest forming a small-diameter portion as recited in claims 1 and 15 either. Therefore, the invention of claims 1-16 is not anticipated by nor obvious from Kin taken alone or in combination with the remaining art of record.

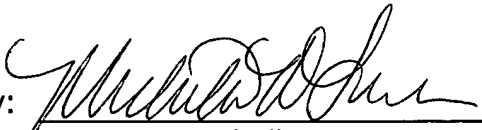
Original claim 4 was rejected under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Kin in view of Matesco. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 4 is submitted to be patentable over Kin for the reasons advanced above. The Examiner's further reliance on Matesco does not overcome the deficiencies of Kin noted above. In this regard, Matesco discloses the use of nickel alloys in the manufacture of a cup, but there is no teaching or suggestion in Matesco of forming a small-diameter portion as required by applicant's claims 1 and 15 and, thus, even if Kin could be combined with Matesco, the invention of applicant's claims 1 and 15 would still not be anticipated nor obvious.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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